

## HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT[441]

### Notice of Intended Action

#### **Proposing rule making related to child care programs and providing an opportunity for public comment**

The Human Services Department hereby proposes to amend Chapter 118, “Child Care Quality Rating System,” Iowa Administrative Code.

#### *Legal Authority for Rule Making*

This rule making is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code section 237A.12.

#### *State or Federal Law Implemented*

This rule making implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code section 237A.30.

#### *Purpose and Summary*

Iowa established a voluntary Quality Rating System (QRS) for child care programs in 2006 to provide an opportunity for child care providers to meet ongoing standards for quality ratings based on the type of child care program and meet the applicable criteria for each rating level. Achievement bonuses could be awarded as providers met the ratings standards.

Iowa began to redesign the QRS in 2015. A QRS oversight team, which included partners from a variety of state agencies, provider organizations and child care providers, gathered feedback and provided advice to the Department on ways to strengthen the QRS program. Statewide focus groups were conducted to gather specific input, and an extensive literature review of other states’ efforts was conducted. Surveys were used to gather input.

An increased effort toward evidence-based practices was developed with a comprehensive approach to supporting all providers. A continuous quality improvement approach was developed. The QRS was redesigned into a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and rebranded as Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K). A new electronic data system was also developed to support the new program. Achievement bonuses may be awarded as funds are available. New administrative rules, proposed in this rule making, are required to guide the work.

The rules currently in effect (Division I) will continue to support the current QRS program until the program sunsets after the ratings for all providers for the current QRS program will have expired and when those providers will no longer be eligible for that QRS program but may apply for the IQ4K quality rating.

The new proposed rules for IQ4K (Division II) will apply for all child care programs applying to IQ4K, the new QRIS program. Child care programs will no longer be able to apply to the current QRS program (Division I) once the rules for IQ4K in Division II are in effect.

#### *Fiscal Impact*

The new IQ4K program involves more stringent criteria at each level that providers must meet to be eligible. Increases in achievement bonuses will help cover the additional costs to the providers, and the bonuses offer financial incentives for providers to invest the time, effort and money to meet the criteria. The program continues to be voluntary, and the Department’s goal is to improve the quality of care offered by child care providers. The increase in the achievement bonuses to be awarded are to be funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from April 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, at which time the obligation period for the ARPA funds ends. After that, the anticipated ongoing balance of the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) is expected to cover the cost through at least SFY 2026 based on status quo funding.

### *Jobs Impact*

After analysis and review of this rule making, no impact on jobs has been found.

### *Waivers*

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rule making would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Department for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to rule 441—1.8(17A,217).

### *Public Comment*

Any interested person may submit written comments concerning this proposed rule making. Written comments in response to this rule making must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on February 15, 2022. Comments should be directed to:

Nancy Freudenberg  
Iowa Department of Human Services  
Hoover State Office Building, Fifth Floor  
1305 East Walnut Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0114  
Email: [appeals@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:appeals@dhs.state.ia.us)

### *Public Hearing*

No public hearing is scheduled at this time. As provided in Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)“b,” an oral presentation regarding this rule making may be demanded by 25 interested persons, a governmental subdivision, the Administrative Rules Review Committee, an agency, or an association having 25 or more members.

### *Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee*

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rule making by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rule making at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee’s meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rule-making actions are proposed:

ITEM 1. Adopt the following new Division I heading preceding **441—Chapter 118**, preamble:

#### DIVISION I QUALITY RATING SYSTEM (QRS)

ITEM 2. Amend **441—Chapter 118**, Division I preamble, as follows:

#### PREAMBLE

This Division I of this chapter establishes rules for the child care quality rating system, which is designed for child care programs that primarily serve children between birth and the age of 12. Participation in the quality rating system is voluntary. The chapter Division I includes application procedures and standards for the quality rating. Rules 441—118.1(237A) through 441—118.8(237A) are in effect until Division I sunsets, when all providers approved for this program are no longer eligible under Division I. As of [the effective date of these amendments], child care programs applying for a new rating will apply to the Iowa quality for kids (IQ4K) quality rating improvement system outlined in Division II.

ITEM 3. Amend subrule 118.2(2) as follows:

**118.2(2) Ongoing standards.** ~~Until August 1, 2011, eligible applicants have the choice of applying under this subrule or under subrule 118.2(1). Effective August 1, 2011, all eligible applicants must apply for a quality rating under this subrule.~~ Effective [the effective date of these amendments], for new applications, child care programs applying for a new rating will apply to the Iowa quality for kids (IQ4K) quality rating system outlined in Division II.

a. and b. No change.

ITEM 4. Adopt the following **new 441—Chapter 118**, Division II heading:

DIVISION II  
IOWA QUALITY FOR KIDS (IQ4K)

ITEM 5. Adopt the following **new 441—Chapter 118**, Division II preamble:

PREAMBLE

Division II of this chapter establishes rules for the IQ4K rating system and Iowa's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for child care providers. Participation in IQ4K is voluntary. Division II includes application procedures and standards to guide the quality rating process. The rules in Division II are in effect for new applications for child care providers applying for the IQ4K program.

ITEM 6. Adopt the following **new** rules 441—118.9(237A) to 441—118.39(237A):

**441—118.9(237A) Definitions.**

*"Action plan"* means a written, detailed sequence of steps taken or activities performed to reach one or more goals.

*"All staff"* means program administrator or director, assistant program administrator or assistant director, on-site supervisor, lead teacher and staff counted as part of the staff-to-child ratio.

*"Area education agency"* or *"AEA"* means an agency working as an educational partner with public and accredited nonpublic schools to help learners, school staff, parents and communities. AEAs provide early intervention services, special education support services, media and technology services, a variety of instructional services, professional development and leadership to promote school improvement as established in Iowa Code chapter 273.

*"Assessment tool"* means a tool used to gather and provide educators, parents, guardians, and caretakers with critical information about a child's educational growth and development. Assessment tools are used to determine what children in care know, understand and are able to do. Assessment results drive the ways teachers support and assess children's learning, plan their curriculum to support each child, monitor progress and identify next steps.

*"Assistant program administrator"* or *"assistant director"* means the staff member working directly under the administrator or director and assisting with program planning, managing, marketing and directing.

*"Assistant teacher"* means any staff member working under the supervision of a lead teacher or other licensed personnel who has the ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of education and related service programs. Other terms used may include paraprofessional, educational aide, associate, or instructional aide.

*"Caring for our children"* or *"CFOC"* means the national health and safety performance standard guidelines for early care and education programs representing the best practices based on evidence, expertise, and experience for quality health and safety policies for early care and education settings.

*"Child and adult care food program"* or *"CACFP"* means a federal United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) CNP that provides a subsidy for serving nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled at participating child care centers, homes, and adult day care centers. CACFP also provides reimbursements for meals served to children and youth participating in afterschool care programs, children residing in emergency shelters, and adults over the age of 60 or living with a

disability and enrolled in adult day care facilities. In order to qualify for reimbursement, the meals served must meet federal guidelines.

*“Child care experience”* means knowledge and skills learned through employment or volunteer work in a licensed child care center, a school-aged only program, a preschool, a registered child development home or as a child care home provider.

*“Child care nurse consultant”* or *“CCNC”* means a registered nurse licensed in the state of Iowa who has completed training incorporating the nationally approved child care health competencies for health and safety in child care and early education. The CCNC provides on-site consultation, technical assistance, care planning for children with special health needs and training to child care and early education providers regarding health and safety. The CCNC is employed by or has a written agreement with the local Title V maternal and child health agency or the Iowa department of public health (IDPH) for service delivery directly through the state-level Title V maternal and child health program administered by the IDPH bureau of family health.

*“Child care resource and referral”* or *“CCR&R”* means the statewide (regionally based) agency focused on supporting quality child care throughout the state of Iowa. CCR&R serves as the starting point for all IQ4K applications and provides free technical assistance and consultation to providers throughout the IQ4K application process.

*“Child development associate credential”* or *“CDA”* means a nationally recognized credential earned by individuals working in the early child care and education field. The CDA credential is based on a core set of competency standards and includes an assessment process by the Council for Professional Recognition.

*“Child development home”* means a person or program registered under Iowa Code section 237A.3A that may provide child care to seven or more children at any one time.

*“ChildNet certification”* means a verified completion of the 25-hour ChildNet training series and completion of the certification process.

*“ChildNet training”* means the 25-hour training series offered through CCR&R focused on areas specifically designed for child development home providers.

*“Child nutrition programs”* or *“CNP”* means federally funded programs administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The programs are designed to help ensure that children receive nutritious meals and snacks to assist in promoting health and educational readiness. Programs serving nutritious meals and snacks are reimbursed for participating.

*“Classroom assessment scoring system”* or *“CLASS”* means an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in center-based classrooms.

*“Community resources”* means the various people, places or services that offer support to child care programs and the children and families they serve.

*“Coprovider”* means a second approved provider in a Category C registered child development home.

*“Culturally sensitive”* means the knowledge, skills, attributes and beliefs that enable people to work well with, respond effectively to and be supportive of people in a cross-cultural setting.

*“Curriculum”* means a written plan that outlines how students shall be taught. The curriculum consists of the plans for the learning experiences through which children acquire knowledge, skills, abilities, and understanding. The curriculum may include lessons, instructional materials, teaching techniques, or activities.

*“Department”* means the Iowa department of human services.

*“Developmental screening tool”* means a research-based questionnaire or checklist that asks questions about a child’s development, including but not limited to language, movement, thinking, behavior and emotions. Developmental screening shall not be used to establish a diagnosis for a child but rather to help educators, parents, guardians or caretakers determine whether more in-depth assessment may be the next appropriate step.

*“Early childhood-positive behavioral interventions and supports”* or *“EC-PBIS”* means Iowa’s pyramid model initiative which offers early childhood programs a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to promoting social-emotional development and addressing challenging behaviors among

young children. EC-PBIS creates nurturing environments for children equipped with supported staff trained to respond to challenging behaviors to support the goal of fostering positive mental health at a young age.

*“EC-PBIS module training”* means a series of training intended for staff working with young children. The training teaches the pyramid model, which is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children’s healthy social and emotional development. There are different versions of the training depending on what setting and what age group the staff member is working with. Versions include:

1. EC-PBIS for Preschool (modules 1-3) intended for staff working in classroom-based programs with ages three to five.
2. EC-PBIS for Infants and Toddlers (modules 1-3) intended for staff working in classroom-based programs with ages zero to three.
3. EC-PBIS for Family Child Care (modules 1-2) intended for staff working with multiple ages of children in family child care settings.

*“Eligible applicants”* means programs meeting the definition of “facility” or programs operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school.

*“Environment rating scale”* or *“ERS”* means a set of early childhood tools or scales developed through the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The scales are used to measure classroom and program quality through assessments by a trained, independent observer. The scales may also be used for self-assessment and program improvement. Four scales are available based on the type of program and ages of children in the classroom assessed:

1. Family child care environment rating scale (FCCERS) is for programs in a family child care or child development home setting for children from infancy through school age.
2. Infant and toddler environment rating scale (ITERS) for groups of children in center-based care from birth up to three years of age.
3. Early childhood environment rating scale (ECERS) for center-based care with groups of children aged three through five years.
4. School-age care environment rating scale (SACERS) for center-based programs with groups of school-age children aged 5 through 12 years.

*“ERS assessment”* means an evaluation conducted through an on-site observation of an early childhood care and education classroom or program using one of the environment rating scales: FCCERS, ITERS, ECERS, or SACERS. The assessment is completed by a trained assessor and administered by entities approved by the department or the department’s designee.

*“ERS improvement plan”* means the action plan created by a program or classroom to lay out ideas for improving program quality. It uses a framework based on ERS criteria and definitions. The ERS improvement plan follows and builds upon a completed ERS classroom or program self-assessment using the appropriate ERS.

*“ERS score sheet”* means the form used to evaluate and score a program or classroom based on the ERS items and indicators.

*“Facility”* means a licensed child care center, a preschool, a program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school, or a registered child development home.

*“Full-time child care experience”* means knowledge and skills learned through employment or volunteer work, at least 30 hours per week or 130 hours per month, in a licensed child care center, a school-aged only program, a preschool, or a registered child development home or as a child care home provider.

*“Head Start program performance standards”* means the mandatory regulations that grantees and delegate agencies must implement in order to operate a Head Start program. The performance standards are designed to ensure that Head Start goals and objectives are implemented successfully.

*“Health and safety checklist for early care and education (ECE) programs”* means the nationally recognized quality assessment tool, conducted by a CCNC or another designee as approved by the department, that uses key observable health and safety standards from CFOC. If followed, these standards

are most likely to prevent adverse outcomes for children and staff in ECE settings. For the health and safety checklist, “observable” is defined as the following:

1. Requires interaction with the staff or director only to ask where to find an item or identify products.
2. Able to observe when walking through a program over a two-hour period of time.
3. The standard or item can be seen and evaluated in an objective way.
4. Observation may include opening windows, taking measurements (for example, measuring the depth of an impact surface or height of equipment), smelling for odors and reading labels (for example, checking dates on medication labels).
5. Does not require checking records or documents, such as child immunizations, professional development records or written program policies.

*“Internal coach”* means the staff member, identified by the program administrator, responsible for going into classrooms and supporting staff on the implementation of the EC-PBIS policies and practices. The internal coach shall be a member of the program’s positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) leadership team.

*“Iowa early care and education program administrator roles career pathway”* means the statewide professional development path ([www.ecieducationpathway.org](http://www.ecieducationpathway.org)) designed to assist early childhood center administrators or other early childhood leaders to develop a personal professional development plan as an early childhood educator II or early childhood educator III.

*“Iowa early care and education teaching roles career pathway”* means the statewide professional development path ([www.ecieducationpathway.org](http://www.ecieducationpathway.org)) designed to assist early childhood teachers in a licensed center or a child development home to develop a personal professional development plan as an early childhood educator I, an early childhood educator II or an early childhood educator III.

*“Iowa early learning standards”* or *“IELS”* means a comprehensive resource tool developed to support and enhance children’s learning and development. The IELS provides descriptions of the knowledge, behaviors and skills that children from birth through age five may demonstrate and can be used to share information with anyone who cares for or works with children during the first 2,000 days of life.

*“Iowa quality preschool program standards”* means standards developed by the Iowa department of education based on the ten standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation.

*“IQ4K teaching staff qualifications worksheet”* means the tool used to calculate an average score in the area of teaching staff qualification using a combination of the educational background and related work experience of identified teaching staff members.

*“Leadership team”* means the team of people that is working to implement a programwide EC-PBIS. The team is composed of program administrators, teachers and a coach. The leadership team is responsible for guiding the programwide process and making decisions on how to support implementation of the EC-PBIS practices throughout the whole program.

*“Lead teacher”* means the staff member responsible for providing a safe and developmentally appropriate classroom that complies with legislation, policies, and procedures. The lead teacher nurtures children, plans and provides instruction and other activities, ensures student safety, directs the work of other teachers in the classroom, communicates with parents and guardians, is familiar with emergency procedures, and ensures children with diverse needs are included and have their needs met at all times.

*“Meals”* means any breakfasts, lunches, snacks and suppers the child care program serves to children while in care.

*“National Administrator Credential”* or *“NAC”* means the 40-hour comprehensive training for child care and education administrators and successful completion of the certification process offered through the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) Commission.

*“National School Lunch Program”* or *“NSLP”* means a federal CNP operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost lunches to children each school day.

*“On-site supervisor”* means the individual responsible for the daily supervision of the program who must be on site daily, either during the hours of operation that children are present or at a minimum of eight hours of the program’s hours of operation.

*“Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children”* or *“PTR-YC”* means the training based on the PTR-YC process for use in early childhood care and education settings including pre-K classrooms and consists of teams and goal setting, practical data collection, functional behavioral assessment, intervention planning and implementation. All steps are designed for use by early childhood providers.

*“Professional development plan”* means the individualized plan used to improve knowledge and skills. Professional development plans shall address the following:

1. Assessment of an individual’s current interests, knowledge and skills.
2. Identification of specific areas for improvement.
3. Development of strategies and resources.
4. Creation of opportunities to reflect and demonstrate an individual’s professional growth.

*“Professional development training”* means continuing education and career training offered by a department-approved training organization to child care and education providers to help them develop new skills, stay up to date on current trends and advance their careers.

*“Program”* refers to the complete operation of an eligible facility applying for an IQ4K rating.

*“Program administrator or director”* means a department-approved staff member responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of a child care program. The person is in charge of all aspects of running the program, including scheduling trainings, planning educational activities, hiring and managing properly trained staff, handling the budget, and establishing well-defined policies and procedures. The person is responsible for everything that takes place within the program and acts as the main communication hub between parents, teachers and children.

*“Programwide PBIS training”* or *“PW PBIS training”* means the training intended for leadership teams of classroom-based early childhood programs. The purpose of the training is to help guide and support the leadership team through the programwide EC-PBIS process.

*“Provider”* means the person or program that applies for registration to provide child care and is approved as a child development home.

*“Quality rating oversight team”* means the workgroup convened to provide oversight and guidance to the department regarding Iowa’s QRIS.

*“School-aged only program”* means an eligible facility providing care primarily to children aged 5 through 12 when school is not in session, including but not limited to before school, after school, out-of-school days during the school year and summer break.

*“Seamless summer option”* or *“SSO”* means a federal CNP which allows school food authorities participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Program to serve meals free of charge to children 18 years and under from low-income areas.

*“Self-assessment”* means an evaluation of current program policies, practices and procedures in comparison to best-practice standards based on the most up-to-date research.

*“Social-emotional-behavioral mental health”* or *“SEBMH”* means the way in which an individual thinks, feels, communicates, acts and learns. These skills contribute to resilience and to how individuals relate to others, respond to stress and emotions, and make choices. Foundational knowledge and skills that promote SEBMH include self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills that support positive well-being and academic success.

*“Specialized track”* means a modified IQ4K application for eligible applicants who have successfully provided adequate documentation of current verification and certification in one of the department’s preapproved specialized track areas.

*“Staff”* means any individual employed by and working at the facility under the supervision of the program administrator or director or assistant program administrator or assistant director.

*“Summer food service program”* or *“SFSP”* means a federal CNP that reimburses program operators who serve free healthy meals and snacks to children 18 years and under from low-income areas.

*“Teaching staff”* means all lead teachers and assistant teachers.

**441—118.10(237A) Application for Iowa quality for kids (IQ4K) rating.** Eligible applicants shall apply for an IQ4K rating by completing the appropriate application and submitting all required supporting documentation.

**118.10(1) *Standards to be used.*** The quality rating will be based on the standards in rules 441—118.21(237A) through 441—118.25(237A) for a child care center, preschool, or program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school; rules 441—118.27(237A) through 441—118.31(237A) for school-aged only programs; and rules 441—118.33(237A) through 441—118.37(237A) for child development homes.

**118.10(2) *Application for IQ4K.*** All applications must be accessed, completed and submitted to the applicant's designated CCR&R representative through the IQ4K database located at [iq4k.stateofiowadhs.org/login](http://iq4k.stateofiowadhs.org/login).

**441—118.11(237A) Application effective date.** The effective date of an approved IQ4K application shall be determined as listed in these subrules.

**118.11(1) *New or nonrated applicant, Levels 1-4.*** The application effective date will be the day the department certifies the application is complete and makes the appropriate award determination.

**118.11(2) *New or nonrated applicant, Level 5.*** The application effective date will be the day the department confirms the program's scores on the ERS and subsequently makes the appropriate award determination. The effective date of a program whose assessment opportunity has been forfeited, as outlined in rule 441—118.25(237A), shall be the date the department determined the assessment opportunity was forfeited.

**118.11(3) *Currently rated applicant, Levels 1-4.*** If the program's new application is submitted prior to the IQ4K expiration date, the new application's effective date shall be the first day of the month following the program's current expiration date.

**118.11(4) *Currently rated applicant, Level 5.*** If the program's new application is submitted 30 calendar days prior to the IQ4K expiration date, the new application's effective date shall be the first day of the month following the program's current expiration date.

*a.* If the program's new application is not submitted 30 calendar days prior to the IQ4K expiration date, the new application effective date will be the day the department confirms the program's scores on the ERS and subsequently makes the appropriate award determination.

*b.* If the ERS process is not complete by the time of the program's IQ4K expiration date, the program's IQ4K rating will expire and the program will not have an IQ4K rating until the ERS process is complete and a new IQ4K rating is determined.

*c.* The effective date of a program whose assessment opportunity has been forfeited, as outlined in rule 441—118.25(237A), shall be the date the department determined the assessment opportunity was forfeited.

**118.11(5) *Currently rated applicant, mid-rating increase to Levels 2-4.*** The application effective date will be the day the department certifies the application is complete and makes the appropriate award determination.

**118.11(6) *Currently rated applicant, mid-rating increase to Level 5.*** The application effective date will be the day the department confirms the program's scores on the ERS and subsequently makes the appropriate award determination. The effective date of a program whose assessment opportunity has been forfeited, as outlined in rule 441—118.25(237A), shall be the date the department determined the assessment opportunity was forfeited.

**441—118.12(237A) Approved program's expiration date.** An approved program's IQ4K expiration date shall be the last day of the month, two years from the application's effective date.

**441—118.13(237A) Renewal application submission, Levels 1-4.** Eligible applicants may submit an application for IQ4K renewal up to 45 calendar days in advance of the current IQ4K expiration date.



**441—118.14(237A) Renewal application submission, Level 5.** Eligible applicants may submit an application for IQ4K renewal up to 60 calendar days in advance of the current IQ4K expiration date.

**441—118.15(237A) Increased rating.** Currently rated IQ4K programs may submit an application for a higher quality rating no sooner than 12 months after the effective date of the current IQ4K certificate.

**441—118.16(237A) Change in location of facility.** If the location of a rated program changes, the program must notify the department. The program's current IQ4K rating will be invalid, and the program must submit a new application. The department shall make a new determination of the appropriate rating.

**441—118.17(237A) Ongoing eligibility.** All applicants awarded an IQ4K certification level must continue to meet all eligibility requirements of the awarded level throughout the entire certification period.

**118.17(1)** Programs unable to maintain full compliance with all eligibility requirements at their awarded level may apply for a waiver of eligibility within 30 calendar days of their inability to do so.

**118.17(2)** Waivers shall be awarded at the discretion of the department, in consultation with the quality rating oversight team.

**118.17(3)** Programs that are not able to meet all eligibility requirements of the awarded level throughout the entire certification period or that do not receive a waiver will have their IQ4K rating removed immediately.

**118.17(4)** Provisionally licensed programs are not eligible to apply for IQ4K participation.

**441—118.18(237A) Monitoring.** Programs awarded an IQ4K rating shall agree to scheduled on-site and virtual program monitoring by the department or the department's designee to confirm and review compliance with criteria of awarded IQ4K rating.

**441—118.19(237A) Professional development training.** Only training taken from a department-approved training organization shall be accepted toward professional training requirements. Secondary education credits shall count as one secondary education credit equaling 15 training hours based on ages of the children served in the program.

**441—118.20(237A) Rating standards for a child care center, a preschool, or a program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school.** To participate in IQ4K QRIS, a child care center, preschool, or program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school shall certify that its facility meets the applicable criteria as defined in rules 441—118.21(237A) through 441—118.25(237A).

**118.20(1)** Eligible applicants providing adequate documentation of current verification or certification in one of the preapproved specialized track areas shall only be required to satisfy the criteria outlined in the application consistent with their specialized track.

**118.20(2)** Programs with more than one classroom shall not be eligible to apply using a specialized track application unless over 50 percent of their eligible classrooms meet the specialized track requirements.

**118.20(3)** Eligible applicants shall be able to earn credit for participation in more than one of the specialized track areas.

**441—118.21(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 1 child care center, preschool, or program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school.** To be rated at a Level 1, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the seven designated categories listed in Level 1 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks.

**118.21(1) Nutrition and physical activity.**

*a.* All staff members who prepare meals shall complete one of the department-approved food safety trainings.

b. A self-assessment and action plan in the area of nutrition shall be completed for an eligible facility.

c. A self-assessment and action plan in the area of physical activity shall be completed for an eligible facility.

**118.21(2) Professional development.**

a. All staff shall complete a professional development plan within six months of each person's hiring date and update the plan annually.

b. All staff shall complete one of the department-identified new staff orientation courses and must provide a valid certificate of completion. Newly hired staff shall have nine months from date of hire to complete this requirement.

**118.21(3) Family and community partnerships.**

a. The program shall provide an orientation for new families.

b. The program shall complete one annual activity that promotes partnerships.

**118.21(4) Teaching staff qualifications.** All lead teachers shall show participation in Tier 1 training or meet a higher tier qualification on the Iowa early care and education teaching roles career pathway within six months of starting employment.

**118.21(5) Teaching and learning.**

a. The program administrator and at least one lead teacher shall complete two hours of training on the Iowa early learning standards.

b. The program shall develop and implement a comprehensive discipline and behavior policy that promotes positive relationships.

**118.21(6) Environment.**

a. The program shall develop and implement, as applicable to ages served, the following policies aligned to CFOC:

- (1) Supervision.
- (2) Safe sleep.
- (3) Playground equipment stability and fall surfacing and inspection.
- (4) Missing child.
- (5) Strangulation prevention.
- (6) Sign in and out tracking system for children and visitors.

b. The program shall submit one of the following annually:

(1) Form 470-5676: IQ4K Interaction and Relationship Self-Assessment, which shall be completed by teaching staff.

(2) CLASS assessment for the age-level being served completed for each classroom by a trained observer.

(3) Teaching pyramid observation tool (TPOT) or teacher pyramid infant toddler observation scale (TPITOS) assessment tools for infants and toddlers completed for each classroom by a trained observer.

**118.21(7) Leadership and administration.**

a. All staff shall complete Form 470-5680: IQ4K Staff Self-Assessment annually.

b. The program administrator shall complete Form 470-5677: IQ4K Program Assessment annually.

**441—118.22(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 2 child care center, preschool, or program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school.** To be rated at a Level 2, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the seven designated categories listed in Levels 1 and 2 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1 and 2.

**118.22(1) Nutrition and physical activity.**

a. The program shall choose one of the following:

- (1) The program shall actively participate in CACFP, NSLP, or another department-approved CNP.
- (2) The program shall complete all of the following as applicable to ages served:

1. Program staff and their supervisor planning the menu shall complete the CACFP Steps to Success module 2 lessons as identified by the department that cover the CACFP meal pattern.

2. Infant lead teachers and their supervisor shall complete the video “CACFP Child Care Center Infant Staff Training” or Iowa CACFP Infant Training—Steps to Success module 15, parts as identified by the department.

3. All lead teachers and their supervisors responsible for mealtime supervision shall complete the video “CACFP Child Care Center Staff Training” or the Iowa CACFP Wellness module—Meaningful Mealtimes.

b. The program shall identify and implement one physical activity goal from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.22(2) Professional development.**

a. All staff who administer medication shall complete the Medication Administration Skills Competency Course or other training as approved by the department and hold a valid certification of completion.

b. All staff who administer medication shall also successfully complete a competency skills evaluation assessment checklist or department-approved equivalent and hold a valid certification of completion. There shall be one person who meets these criteria present on site in the program at all times.

c. All teaching staff shall complete ten annual training hours of professional development.

**118.22(3) Family and community partnerships.**

a. The program shall offer one conference with each family per year to discuss each child’s progress, strengths, and needs in all developmental areas.

b. Programs shall share child assessment information with the child’s family.

c. The program shall complete two activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.22(4) Teaching staff qualifications.** All lead teachers shall meet Tier 1, step 1 of 40 hours of training toward a CDA or shall meet a higher tier qualification on the Iowa early care and education teaching roles career pathway.

**118.22(5) Teaching and learning.**

a. The program shall use a curriculum that is aligned with the Iowa early learning standards, addresses the multiple domain areas, and is specific to the ages of the children the program serves.

b. The program shall develop and implement a policy that eliminates or severely limits expulsion, suspension, and punitive or other exclusionary discipline.

c. The program shall develop and implement policies regarding the use of an approved developmental screening tool for all children within 60 days of enrollment and at least annually to identify children who may need additional evaluation and intervention strategies.

**118.22(6) Environment.**

a. The program administrator or assistant administrator shall complete an ERS training choosing between ITERS, ECERS or SACERS and provide a certificate of completion.

b. The program shall provide an environment supportive to, and encouraging of, culture, age, race, ability, special needs, and gender diversity.

c. The program shall develop and implement a tobacco-free and nicotine-free policy aligned to the Iowa department of public health’s policy guidelines.

**118.22(7) Leadership and administration.**

a. The program administrator shall complete and annually update Form 470-5679: IQ4K Quality Improvement Action Plan.

b. All staff shall receive a written evaluation at least once a year.

c. The program administrator shall have at least two years of full-time experience working in the field.

**441—118.23(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 3 child care center, preschool, or program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school.** To be rated at a Level 3, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the seven designated categories listed in Levels 1, 2 and 3 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1, 2 and 3.

**118.23(1) *Nutrition and physical activity.***

*a.* The program shall choose one of the following:

- (1) The program shall actively participate in CACFP, NSLP, or another department-approved CNP.
- (2) If exempt from CACFP or NSLP, the program shall identify and implement two nutrition goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

1. Programs providing adequate documentation they provide care for four hours a day or less are exempt from the CACFP or NSLP participation requirement.

2. Nonprofit programs shall qualify for an exemption from the CACFP or NSLP requirement if they provide adequate documentation that meets one of the following criteria:

- The percentage of children enrolled in the program qualifying for free or reduced meals is five percent or less.

- The program's licensed capacity is 30 or less.

- The program serves two or fewer meals or snacks per day.

- The program is open and operating three days a week or less.

3. For-profit programs shall qualify for an exemption from the CACFP or NSLP requirement if they are able to provide adequate documentation that the percentage of children enrolled in the program qualifying for free or reduced meals is 25 percent or less.

*b.* The program shall identify and implement two physical activity goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.23(2) *Professional development.*** All teaching staff shall complete ten annual training hours of professional development.

**118.23(3) *Family and community partnerships.***

*a.* The program shall promote culturally sensitive practices and procedures.

*b.* The program shall complete three activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.23(4) *Teaching staff qualifications.*** The average score for all lead teachers shall be three points or more on the IQ4K teaching staff qualifications worksheet.

**118.23(5) *Teaching and learning.***

*a.* The program shall utilize an appropriate assessment tool throughout the year that aligns with the curriculum to gather information on each child's strengths, progress, and needs.

*b.* The program shall share community resources with families as needed based on the information gathered from the child's assessment.

*c.* The program shall develop and implement policies and procedures for inclusive practices for children with diverse needs, including those with identified disabilities, language barriers, identified behavioral needs, or specialized health needs.

**118.23(6) *Environment.***

*a.* Thirty percent or more of lead teachers shall complete an appropriate ERS training choosing between ITERS, ECERS or SACERS as applicable to ages served, and provide a certificate of completion.

*b.* The program shall participate in the completion of the health and safety checklist for early care and education programs.

*c.* The program shall develop and implement a policy regarding oral health aligned with CFOC.

**118.23(7) *Leadership and administration.***

*a.* The program administrator shall complete one of the following:

- (1) NAC or another DHS-approved credential.

- (2) Thirty training hours (or more) in early childhood and ten training hours or more in leadership, administration, or management.

*b.* The program administrator shall have one of the following:

- (1) Three years or more of full-time experience working in the field.

- (2) One year or more full-time experience as a program administrator.

**441—118.24(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 4 child care center, preschool, or program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school.** To be rated at a Level 4, an

eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the seven designated categories listed in Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4.

**118.24(1) *Nutrition and physical activity.***

*a.* The program shall choose one of the following:

(1) The program shall actively participate in CACFP, NSLP, or another department-approved CNP and shall identify and implement one nutrition goal from the completed action plan in Level 1.

(2) If exempt from CACFP or NSLP, the program shall identify and implement three nutrition goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

*b.* The program shall identify and implement three physical activity goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.24(2) *Professional development.***

*a.* All teaching staff shall complete 12 annual hours or more of professional development.

*b.* Sixty percent or more of all lead teachers shall complete the applicable EC-PBIS trainings based on age groups served.

(1) EC-PBIS Preschool modules 1 and 2.

(2) EC-PBIS Infant and Toddler modules 1 and 2.

**118.24(3) *Family and community partnerships.*** The program shall complete four activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.24(4) *Teaching staff qualifications.*** The average score for all teaching staff shall be four points or more on the IQ4K teaching staff qualification worksheet.

**118.24(5) *Teaching and learning.***

*a.* The teaching staff shall use assessment data and information gathered about children and families to make changes in their learning environment and activities.

*b.* The teaching staff shall participate in planning with families and outside experts, as needed, for children with diverse needs, including those with identified disabilities, language barriers, identified behavioral needs, and specialized health needs.

**118.24(6) *Environment.***

*a.* Sixty percent or more of lead teachers shall complete an appropriate ERS training choosing between ITERS, ECERS or SACERS as applicable to ages served, and provide a certificate of completion.

*b.* One-third of all classrooms shall complete the ERS scoresheet with self-assessment and improvement plan using a minimum of one classroom per scale, if applicable.

*c.* The program shall score an average of 2.5 or higher on the health and safety checklist for early care and education.

**118.24(7) *Leadership and administration.***

*a.* The program administrator shall meet Tier 1 or higher on the Iowa early care and education program administrator roles career pathway.

*b.* The program administrator shall have two or more years of full-time experience as a program administrator.

**441—118.25(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 5 child care center, preschool, or program operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school.**

**118.25(1) *Criteria for each category.*** To be rated at Level 5, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the seven designated categories listed in Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. To be rated at a Level 5, an eligible facility must also meet the following criteria:

*a. Minimum score.* The facility must earn a minimum score of 5.0 in each assessed classroom on the appropriate ERS.

*b. Approved assessor.* An assessor approved by the department or department's designee must perform an environment rating assessment.

*c. Number of classrooms assessed.* At least one-third of the facility's classrooms must be assessed, including at least one classroom in each age group serviced by the facility.

*d. Time frame for assessment.* Programs eligible for ERS assessment must undergo their assessment within 90 days of department approval unless an extension is requested and approved by the department.

*e. Assessments not done timely.* Programs that do not undergo their assessment within 90 days of approval by the department or do not receive an approved extension from the department shall forfeit their opportunity for an assessment and will be awarded an IQ4K Level 4 rating with an effective date as outlined in rule 441—118.11(237A).

**118.25(2) Nutrition and physical activity.**

*a.* The program shall choose one of the following:

(1) The program shall actively participate in CACFP, NSLP, or another department-approved CNP and shall identify and implement two nutrition goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

(2) If exempt from CACFP or NSLP, the program shall identify and implement four nutrition goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

*b.* The program shall identify and implement four physical activity goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.25(3) Professional development.**

*a.* All teaching staff shall complete 12 annual hours or more of professional development.

*b.* Sixty percent or more of all lead teachers and the internal coach shall complete the EC-PBIS trainings as follows:

(1) EC-PBIS Preschool modules 3a and 3b.

(2) EC-PBIS Infant and Toddler modules 3.

(3) Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children (PTR-YC).

**118.25(4) Family and community partnerships.**

*a.* The program shall complete five activities annually that promote partnerships.

*b.* The program shall offer one additional conference with each family of preschool age children in care, per year, to discuss each child's progress, strengths, and needs in all developmental areas. Assessment information shall be shared with the family.

**118.25(5) Teaching staff qualifications.** The average score for all teaching staff shall be eight points or more on the IQ4K teaching staff qualification worksheet.

**118.25(6) Teaching and learning.**

*a.* The teaching staff shall work with families and other experts to implement instructional and environmental adaptations that support learning for each child, including those with diverse needs, identified disabilities, language barriers, identified behavioral health needs and specialized health needs.

*b.* The leadership team shall complete PW PBIS training. A leadership team must include an administrator, internal coach and teacher.

**118.25(7) Environment.**

*a.* Eighty percent or more of lead teachers shall complete an appropriate ERS training choosing between ITERS, ECERS or SACERS as applicable to ages served, and provide a certificate of completion.

*b.* One-third of all classrooms shall receive an overall score of five or higher on each classroom's ERS assessment when using a minimum of one classroom per scale, if applicable.

*c.* The program shall score an average of 2.75 or higher on the health and safety checklist for early care and education.

**118.25(8) Leadership and administration.**

*a.* The program administrator shall meet Tier 2 or higher on the Iowa early care and education program administrator roles career pathway.

*b.* The program administrator shall have three or more years of full-time experience as a program administrator.

**441—118.26(237A) Rating standards for school-aged only programs.**

**118.26(1)** To participate in IQ4K QRIS, a school-aged only program shall certify that its facility meets the applicable criteria as defined in rules 441—118.27(237A) through 441—118.31 (237A).

**118.26(2)** The following program requirements apply:

*a.* Eligible applicants providing adequate documentation of current verification or certification in one of the preapproved specialized track areas shall only be required to satisfy the criteria outlined in the application consistent with their specialized track.

*b.* Programs with more than one classroom shall not be eligible to apply using a specialized track application unless over 50 percent of their eligible classrooms meet the specialized track requirements.

*c.* Eligible applicants shall be able to earn credit for participation in more than one of the specialized track areas.

**441—118.27(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 1 school-aged only programs.** To be rated at a Level 1, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the six designated categories listed in Level 1 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks.

**118.27(1)** *Nutrition and physical activity.*

*a.* The program administrator and any staff members who prepare meals shall complete one of the department-approved food safety trainings.

*b.* A self-assessment and action plan in the area of nutrition shall be completed for an eligible facility.

*c.* A self-assessment and action plan in the area of physical activity shall be completed for an eligible facility.

**118.27(2)** *Professional development.*

*a.* All staff shall complete a professional development plan within six months of each person's hiring date and update the plan annually.

*b.* All staff shall complete one of the department-identified new staff orientation courses and must provide a valid certificate of completion. Newly hired staff shall have nine months from date of hire to complete this requirement.

**118.27(3)** *Family and community partnerships.*

*a.* The program shall provide an orientation for new families.

*b.* The program shall complete one annual activity that promotes partnerships.

**118.27(4)** *Teaching and learning.*

*a.* The program shall provide assistance or access to tutors to support homework or students' learning needs.

*b.* The program shall develop and implement a comprehensive discipline and behavior policy that promotes positive relationships.

*c.* The program shall develop and implement a comprehensive and age-appropriate schedule of activities.

**118.27(5)** *Environment.*

*a.* The program shall develop and implement, as applicable to ages served, the following policies aligned to CFOC:

- (1) Supervision.
- (2) Bullying prevention.
- (3) Playground equipment stability and fall surfacing and inspection.
- (4) Missing child.
- (5) Strangulation prevention.
- (6) Sign in and out tracking system for children and visitors.
- (7) Technology.

*b.* The program shall submit one of the following annually:

(1) Form 470-5676: IQ4K Interaction and Relationship Self-Assessment, which shall be completed by teaching staff.

(2) CLASS assessment for the age level being served and completed for each classroom by a trained observer.

**118.27(6) Leadership and administration.**

- a. All staff shall complete Form 470-5680: IQ4K Staff Self-Assessment annually.
- b. The program administrator shall complete Form 470-5677: IQ4K Program Assessment annually.
- c. Meetings for all staff shall be conducted two or more times per year.

**441—118.28(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 2 school-aged only programs.** To be rated at a Level 2, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the six designated categories listed in Levels 1 and 2 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1 and 2.

**118.28(1) Nutrition and physical activity.**

- a. The program shall choose one of the following:
  - (1) The program shall actively participate in CACFP, NSLP or another department-approved CNP.
  - (2) The program shall complete all of the following as applicable to ages served:
    1. Program staff planning the meals and their supervisor shall complete the CACFP Steps to Success module 2 lessons as identified by the department that cover the CACFP meal pattern.
    2. All lead staff and their supervisors responsible for mealtime supervision shall complete the video “CACFP School-Age Program Staff Training.”
- b. The program shall identify and implement one physical activity goal from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.28(2) Professional development.**

- a. All staff who administer medication shall complete the Medication Administration Skills Competency Course or other training as approved by the department and hold a valid certification of completion.
- b. All staff who administer medication shall also successfully complete a competency skills evaluation assessment checklist or department-approved equivalent and hold a valid certification of completion. There shall be one person who meets these criteria present on site in the program at all times.
- c. All staff shall complete ten annual training hours of professional development.

**118.28(3) Family and community partnerships.**

- a. The program shall offer one conference with each family per year to discuss each child’s progress, strengths, and needs in all developmental areas.
- b. The program shall complete two activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.28(4) Teaching and learning.**

- a. The program shall develop and implement a curriculum that includes all of the following opportunities each day:
  - (1) Active physical activity.
  - (2) Creative expression.
  - (3) Cooperative games.
  - (4) Free choice with a variety of materials.
  - (5) Academic support.
- b. The program shall develop and implement a policy that eliminates or severely limits expulsion, suspension, and punitive or other exclusionary discipline.

**118.28(5) Environment.**

- a. The program administrator or assistant administrator shall complete the SACERS training and provide a certificate of completion.
- b. The program shall provide an environment supportive to and encouraging of culture, age, race, ability, special needs, and gender diversity.
- c. The program shall develop and implement a tobacco-free and nicotine-free policy aligned to the Iowa department of public health’s policy guidelines.

**118.28(6) Leadership and administration.**



- a. The program administrator shall complete and annually update Form 470-5679: IQ4K Quality Improvement Action Plan.
- b. All staff shall receive a written evaluation at least once a year.
- c. The program administrator shall have at least two or more years of full-time experience working in the field.

**441—118.29(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 3 school-aged only programs.** To be rated at a Level 3, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the six designated categories listed in Levels 1, 2 and 3 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1, 2 and 3.

**118.29(1) *Nutrition and physical activity.***

- a. The program shall choose one of the following:
  - (1) The program shall actively participate in CACFP, NSLP or another department-approved CNP.
  - (2) If exempt from CACFP or NSLP, the program shall identify and implement two nutrition goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.
    - 1. Programs providing adequate documentation that they provide care for four hours a day or less are exempt from the CACFP or NSLP participation requirement.
    - 2. Nonprofit programs shall qualify for an exemption from the CACFP or NSLP requirement if they provide adequate documentation that meets one of the following criteria:
      - The percentage of children enrolled in the program qualifying for free or reduced meals is five percent or less.
      - The program's licensed capacity is 30 children or fewer.
      - The program serves two or fewer meals or snacks per day.
      - The program is open and operating three days a week or less.
    - 3. For-profit programs shall qualify for an exemption from the CACFP or NSLP requirement if they are able to provide adequate documentation that the percentage of children enrolled in the program qualifying for free or reduced meals is 25 percent or less.
- b. The program shall identify and implement two physical activity goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.29(2) *Professional development.*** All staff shall complete ten or more annual training hours of professional development.

**118.29(3) *Family and community partnerships.***

- a. The program shall promote culturally sensitive practices and procedures.
- b. The program shall complete three activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.29(4) *Teaching and learning.***

- a. Program staff shall utilize an appropriate tool throughout the year to gather information about children's strengths, progress, and needs.
- b. The program shall share community resources with families as needed based on the information gathered.
- c. The program shall develop and implement policies and procedures for inclusive practices for children with diverse needs, including those with identified disabilities, language barriers, identified behavioral needs, or specialized health needs.

**118.29(5) *Environment.***

- a. The on-site supervisor shall complete the SACERS training series and provide a certificate of completion.
- b. The program shall participate in the completion of the health and safety checklist for early care and education programs.

**118.29(6) *Leadership and administration.***

- a. The program administrator shall complete:
  - (1) NAC or another department-approved credential, or
  - (2) Thirty training hours or more in a related field and ten training hours or more in leadership.



*b. Approved assessor.* An assessor approved by the department or department's designee must perform the ERS assessment.

*c. Number of classrooms assessed.* At least one-third of the facility's classrooms must be assessed, including at least one classroom in each age group served by the facility.

*d. Time frame for assessment.* Programs eligible for an ERS assessment must undergo their assessment within 90 days of department approval unless an extension is requested and approved by the department.

*e. Assessments not done timely.* Programs that do not undergo their assessment within 90 days of approval by the department or do not receive an approved extension from the department shall forfeit their opportunity for an assessment and will be awarded an IQ4K Level 4 rating with an effective date as outlined in rule 441—118.11(237A).

**118.31(2) Nutrition and physical activity.**

*a.* The program shall choose one of the following:

(1) The program shall actively participate in CACFP, NSLP or another department-approved CNP and shall identify and implement two nutrition goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

(2) If exempt from CACFP or NSLP, the program shall identify and implement four nutrition goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

*b.* The program shall identify and implement four physical activity goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.31(3) Professional development.**

*a.* All staff shall complete 12 or more annual training hours of professional development.

*b.* Sixty percent or more of all staff shall complete six or more hours of department-approved or IQ4K-approved training in the area of SEBMH.

**118.31(4) Family and community partnerships.** The program shall complete five activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.31(5) Teaching and learning.** The teaching staff shall work with families and other experts to implement instructional and environmental adaptations that support the learning for each child including those with diverse needs, language barriers, identified behavioral needs, or specialized health needs.

**118.31(6) Environment.**

*a.* Eighty percent or more of lead teachers shall complete the SACERS training series and provide a certificate of completion.

*b.* One-third of classrooms shall receive an overall score of 5.0 or higher on the SACERS assessment with a minimum of one classroom per scale if applicable.

*c.* The program shall score an average of 2.75 or higher on the health and safety checklist for early care and education.

**118.31(7) Leadership and administration.**

*a.* The program administrator shall have 9 or more credit hours in a related field and 12 or more training hours in leadership, administration or management.

*b.* The program administrator shall have three or more years of full-time experience as a program administrator.

*c.* The on-site supervisor shall have six or more credit hours in a related field and two or more years of full-time experience as an on-site supervisor.

**441—118.32(237A) Rating standards for child development homes.** To participate in IQ4K QRIS, a registered child development home shall certify that it meets the applicable criteria as defined in rules 441—118.33(237A) through 441—118.37(237A). The following program requirements apply:

1. For Category C homes operating with an approved coprovider, both providers must satisfy the applicable criteria where designated.

2. Eligible applicants providing documentation of current verification or certification in one of the preapproved specialized track areas shall only be required to satisfy the criteria outlined in the application consistent with their specialized track.

3. Eligible applicants shall be able to earn credit for participation in more than one of the specialized track areas.

**441—118.33(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 1 rating standards for registered child development homes.** To be rated at Level 1, an eligible registered child development home must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the six designated categories listed in Level 1 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1 and 2.

**118.33(1) *Nutrition and physical activity.***

a. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall complete one of the department-approved food safety trainings.

b. The program shall complete a self-assessment and create an action plan in the area of nutrition.

c. The program shall complete a self-assessment and create an action plan in the area of physical activity.

**118.33(2) *Professional development.*** The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall complete a professional plan annually.

**118.33(3) *Family and community partnerships.***

a. The program shall provide an orientation for new families.

b. The program shall complete one annual activity that promotes partnerships.

**118.33(4) *Provider qualifications.*** The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall have one year or more of full-time child care experience.

**118.33(5) *Teaching and learning.***

a. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall complete two hours of training on the Iowa early learning standards.

b. The program shall develop and implement a comprehensive discipline and behavior policy that promotes positive relationships.

**118.33(6) *Environment.***

a. The program shall develop and implement, as applicable to ages served, the following policies aligned to CFOC:

(1) Supervision.

(2) Safe sleep.

(3) Missing child.

(4) Strangulation prevention.

(5) Sign in and out tracking system for children and visitors.

b. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall complete Form 470-5676: IQ4K Interaction and Relationship Self-Assessment.

c. The program shall annually complete Form 470-5678: IQ4K Program Assessment.

**441—118.34(237A) Criteria for Level 2 rating standards for registered child development homes.** To be rated at a Level 2, an eligible registered child development home must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the six designated categories listed in Levels 1 and 2 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks.

**118.34(1) *Nutrition and physical activity.***

a. The program shall choose one of the following:

(1) The program shall actively participate in CACFP.

(2) The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall complete all of the following as applicable to ages served:

1. Iowa CACFP Steps to Success module 2 lessons as identified by the department that cover the CACFP Meal Pattern.

2. Iowa CACFP Infant Training-Steps to Success module 15, parts one and two.

3. Iowa CACFP Wellness module-Meaningful Mealtimes.

b. The program shall identify and implement one physical activity goal from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.34(2) Professional development.** There shall be one person who meets the following criteria present on site in the program at all times.

a. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall complete ChildNet Training.

b. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall complete 15 hours or more of annual training hours of professional development.

c. The provider shall complete the medication administration skills competency course or other department-approved training and hold a valid certification of completion.

d. The provider shall also successfully complete a competency skills evaluation assessment checklist or department-approved equivalent and hold a valid certification of completion.

**118.34(3) Family and community partnerships.**

a. The program shall offer one conference with each family annually to discuss each child's progress, strengths and needs in all developmental areas. Programs shall share child assessment information with the child's family.

b. The program shall complete two activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.34(4) Provider qualifications.** The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall meet one of the following:

a. Two years or more of full-time experience in child care.

b. Six college credit hours or more in education specific to the age group for whom care is provided.

**118.34(5) Teaching and learning.**

a. The program shall develop and implement a daily schedule with predictable routines that are developmentally appropriate for all ages served.

b. The program shall develop and implement a policy that eliminates or severely limits expulsion, suspension, and punitive or other exclusionary discipline.

c. The program shall develop and implement policies regarding the use of an approved developmental screening tool for all children in care within 60 days of enrollment and at least annually to identify children who may need additional evaluation and intervention strategies.

**118.34(6) Environment.**

a. The program shall provide an environment supportive to, and encouraging of, culture, age, race, ability, special needs, and gender diversity.

b. The program shall develop and implement a policy regarding playground equipment stability and fall surfacing and inspection which are aligned with CFOC.

c. The program shall develop and implement a tobacco-free and nicotine-free policy.

d. The program shall annually complete and update Form 470-5679: IQ4K Quality Improvement Action Plan.

**441—118.35(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 3 rating standards for registered child development homes.** To be rated at a Level 3, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the six designated categories listed in Levels 1, 2 and 3 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1, 2 and 3.

**118.35(1) Nutrition and physical activity.**

a. The program shall actively participate in CACFP.

b. The program shall identify and implement two physical activity goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.35(2) Professional development.**

a. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall complete ChildNet Certification.

b. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall choose one of the following trainings to complete their initial IQ4K rating:

(1) Complete one module of the Program for Infant and Toddler Care.

(2) Complete module 1 of the EC-PBIS for Family Child Care and complete the following implementation guide checklists and review with coach:

1. Relationships.
2. Environments.
3. Expectations, Activities and Feedback.
- (3) Complete School Age Matters training.

c. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall choose one of the other trainings listed above for their subsequent IQ4K ratings until all of the trainings applicable per ages served have been completed.

d. Once the provider and coprovider, as applicable, have completed all of the age applicable trainings, the provider and co-provider shall complete 18 annual hours of approved professional development training on all subsequent IQ4K applications.

**118.35(3) *Family and community partnerships.***

- a. The program shall promote culturally sensitive practices and procedures.
- b. The program shall complete three activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.35(4) *Provider qualifications.*** The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall meet one of the following:

- a. Three years or more of child care experience.
- b. Nine or more college credit hours in education, specific to the age group for whom care is provided.

**118.35(5) *Teaching and learning.***

a. The program shall utilize an appropriate assessment tool throughout the year that aligns with the curriculum to gather information on each child's strengths, progress, and needs.

b. The program shall share community resources with families as needed, based on the information gathered from the child's assessment.

c. The program shall develop and implement policies and procedures for inclusive practices for children with diverse needs, including those with identified disabilities, language barriers, identified behavioral needs, and specialized health needs.

**118.35(6) *Environment.***

a. The provider shall complete the FCCERS ERS training and provide a certificate of completion.

b. A self-assessment and action plan in the area of nutrition shall be completed for an eligible facility.

c. A self-assessment and action plan in the area of physical activity shall be completed for an eligible facility.

**441—118.36(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 4 rating standards for registered child development homes.** To be rated at Level 4, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the six designated categories listed in Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4.

**118.36(1) *Nutrition and physical activity.***

- a. The program shall actively participate in CACFP.
- b. The program shall implement one nutrition goal from the completed action plan in Level 1.
- c. The program shall identify and implement three physical activity goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.36(2) *Professional development.***

a. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall choose one of the following trainings to complete for their initial IQ4K rating:

- (1) Complete two additional modules of the Program for Infant and Toddler Care.
- (2) Complete module 2 of the EC-PBIS for Family Child Care and complete the following implementation guide checklists and review with coach:
  1. Emotions and Emotional Regulation.
  2. Friendships and Problem Solving.

b. The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall choose one of the other trainings listed above for their subsequent IQ4K ratings until all of the trainings applicable per ages served have been completed.

c. Once the provider and coprovider, as applicable, have completed all of the age applicable trainings, the provider and co-provider shall complete 20 annual hours of approved professional development training on all subsequent IQ4K applications.

**118.36(3) *Family and community partnerships.*** The program shall complete four activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.36(4) *Provider qualifications.*** The provider and coprovider, where applicable, shall meet one of the following:

a. The provider shall meet Tier 2 or higher on the Iowa early care and education teaching roles career pathway.

b. The provider shall have three or more years of full-time child care experience.

**118.36(5) *Teaching and learning.***

a. The program shall use information gathered about children and families to make changes in their learning environment and activities.

b. The program shall participate in planning with families and other experts, as needed, for children with diverse needs, including those with identified disabilities, language barriers, identified behavioral health needs and specialized health needs.

**118.36(6) *Environment.***

a. The program shall complete the FCCERS ERS scoresheet with self-assessment and improvement plan.

b. The program shall score an average of 2.5 or higher on the health and safety checklist for early care and education programs.

**441—118.37(237A) Criteria for IQ4K—Level 5 rating standards for registered child development homes.**

**118.37(1) *Criteria for each category.*** To be rated at a Level 5, an eligible facility must satisfy all of the criteria in each of the six designated categories listed in Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 or complete all of the criteria designated in its respective specialized tracks for Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. To be rated at a Level 5 the following criteria must also be met:

a. Minimum score. The facility must earn a minimum score of 5.0 on the FCCERS ERS assessment.

b. Approved assessor. An assessor approved by the department or department's designee must perform the ERS assessment.

c. Time frame for assessment. Programs eligible for an ERS assessment must undergo their assessment within 90 days of department approval unless an extension is requested and approved by the department.

d. Assessments not done timely. Programs that do not undergo their assessment within 90 days of approval by the department or that do not receive an approved extension from the department shall forfeit their opportunity for an assessment and will be awarded an IQ4K Level 4 rating with an effective date as outlined in rule 441—118.11(237A).

**118.37(2) *Nutrition and physical activity.***

a. The program shall actively participate in CACFP.

b. The program shall identify and implement two nutrition goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

c. The program shall identify and implement four physical activity goals from the completed action plan in Level 1.

**118.37(3) *Professional development.***

a. The provider shall choose one of the following trainings to complete their initial IQ4K rating:

(1) Complete two additional modules of the Program for Infant and Toddler Care.

(2) Complete EC-PBIS for Family Child Care Benchmarks of Quality and action plan for continued implementation and growth with coach. The EC-PBIS for Family Child Care must be completed.

*b.* The provider shall then choose one of the other trainings listed above for their subsequent IQ4K ratings until all of the trainings applicable per ages served have been completed.

*c.* Once the provider has completed all of the age-applicable trainings, the provider shall complete 22 annual hours of approved professional development training on all subsequent IQ4K applications.

**118.37(4) *Family and community partnerships.*** The program shall complete five activities annually that promote partnerships.

**118.37(5) *Provider qualifications.***

*a.* The provider shall meet Tier 2 or higher on the Iowa early care and education teaching roles career pathway.

*b.* The provider shall have four or more years of full-time child care experience.

**118.37(6) *Teaching and learning.*** The program shall work with families and other experts to implement instructional and environmental adaptations that support the learning for each child, including those with diverse needs, identified disabilities, language barriers, identified behavioral health needs and specialized health needs.

**118.37(7) *Environment.***

*a.* The program shall achieve a score of 5.0 or higher on the FCCERS ERS assessment.

*b.* The program shall score an average of 2.75 or higher on the health and safety checklist for early care and education programs.

**441—118.38(237A) Award of quality rating.**

**118.38(1)** The facility shall display Form 470-5681: IQ4K QRIS rating certificate in a conspicuous place.

**118.38(2)** Achievement bonuses may be awarded as funds are available.

**441—118.39(237A) Adverse actions.**

**118.39(1)** An eligible applicant shall be notified of the right to appeal the rating decision in accordance with 441—Chapter 7.

**118.39(2)** A participant's quality rating shall be revoked if the facility no longer meets the definition of eligible applicant.